

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
ADULT STATE PROGRAM STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES – DRAFT
AUGUST 10, 2020**

A meeting of the DMH Adult State Program Standing Committee was held via Zoom on August 10, 2020 from 12pm until 3pm.

In attendance:

Committee Members:

Malaika Puffer
Thelma Stoudt
Dan Towle
Ward Nial
Bert Dyer
Vicki Warfield
Kate Hunt

DMH Staff:

Eva Dayon, Quality Management Coordinator

Members of the Public:

Greg
Beatrice Birch
Tom Johnston
Sharon Levenson
Lynn Cardozo

Meeting chaired by Malaika Puffer. Minutes submitted by Vicki Warfield.

I. Waiver of Restriction on Public Comment Period

- a. Dan Towle moved to waive the restriction on public comment period for the duration of the August meeting. Requests that members of the public request permission before speaking and hold questions to the end of the meeting, if not needing to be immediately addressed.
- b. Motion seconded by Thelma Stoudt.
- c. Motion passed, unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. June 2020 Minutes

- Discussion of revisions to June minutes. Added the Committee recommendation that funding go into prevention and community resources, as opposed to any new inpatient or secure residential beds, and encouraged a continued focus on testing for COVID19 on inpatient units.
- Dan Towle motioned to approve minutes with revisions.
- Ward Nial seconded.
- Minutes unanimously approved, with revisions.

b. July 2020 Minutes

- It was suggested that page numbers be added to all multi-page documents.
- In the future, any comments for discussion will be clearly labeled as such, with an asterisk and a note at the end of the document. They will not be included in the final draft of minutes.
- It was noted that, during the July DMH update, members were informed that a racial justice statement had been posted to the DMH website. Members were unable to locate this information on the website, following the meeting.
- Dan Towle motioned to approve the July minutes, with the changes discussed.
- Ward Nial seconded the motion.
- July minutes were unanimously approved, with noted changes.

III. Discussion of Shared Drive and Email

- Vicki Warfield shared that she has set up a Google Group for the Committee, in order to create a central location for shared documents and to allow edits to be made accessible to all members, in real time.
- As part of the Google group, each member may choose to use an email account with the address: <FirstName>@dmhaspsc.org.
- Emails sent to members@dmhaspsc.org will reach all members at the email addresses they have provided.
- Shared documents will include open action items, official recommendation of the Committee to DMH, a spreadsheet of potential members, minutes, agendas, and more.
- The Committee will take a few months to evaluate before voting on whether to keep this new format.

IV. Membership Update

- The Committee agreed that, from now on, potential members will be included on the members email list, in order to gain a better understanding of the Committee's activities.
- Thela Stoudt and Kate Hunt joined the membership subcommittee. The subcommittee now consists of Dan, Marla, Vicki, Thelma, and Kate.
- Greg expressed interest in applying to join the Committee.

V. Listening Session Update

VI. Discussion of Grievance and Appeal Report

- a. Issue of DA's under-reporting incidences of grievances and appeals. Standing committees receiving inaccurate information.
- b. Open Questions from the Committee to DMH:
 - i. What checks and balances are in place to assure that all grievances and appeals are being reported?
 - ii. Can grievance and appeal data be collected by DMH, going forward, that captures which agencies are reporting more than average, which are reporting less, and the checks in place to ensure accurate reporting?

VII. DMH Updates

Mourning Fox and Tom Wiegel:

- Q&A about Middlesex Residential Facility and secure residential data
- Inpatient technology access
 - The Committee expressed concern over perceived disparity between DMH knowledge of technology access in inpatient facilities, and personal experience/patient reports.
- Inpatient rep coverage
 - VPS Board member Tom Johnston informed the Committee that no patient reps had been furloughed and three representatives were providing services until July, when two resigned. There has been no disruption in service, according to both DMH (Tom Wiegel) and Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (Tom Johnston). VPS is in the process of hiring new patient representatives.
- Racial equity data
 - DMH denies the Committee's request to allow a representative to be present for a racial equity committee, which is meeting biweekly to discuss racial justice within DMH and DA's.

VIII. Member Updates and Discussion

- Sarah Levenson and Greg both expressed an intention to apply for Committee membership.

IX. Public Comments

- Greg wanted the Committee to be aware that there is a three bed, locked psychiatric ward at the hospital in Bennington. Expressed that the level of care there is "very poor."
- Heather shared her perspective as having been inpatient in July. She conveyed issues of lack of access to adequate hygiene; poor treatment by staff. In regard to COVID precautions, beds were about three feet apart, and staff often did not wear masks. New COVID regulations delayed discharge by several days.

- Sharon Levenson and Beatrice Birch both expressed gratitude to the Committee for the work performed.

X. September Agenda

- Discussion

Bert Dyer motioned to adjourn, seconded by Dan Towle. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting of the Adult State Program Standing Committee will be held on Monday, September 14th, from noon to 3pm, via Zoom teleconference. Public welcome. To attend, please email Eva.Dayon@vermont.gov or call 802-241-0109.

Summary of Action Items from the August 2020 Meeting of the ASPSC:

- ☐ Request for DMH response: What checks and balances are in place to assure that all grievances and appeals are being reported?
- ☐ Request for DMH response: Can grievance and appeal data be collected by DMH, going forward, that captures which agencies are reporting more than average, which are reporting less, and the checks in place to ensure accurate reporting?
- ☐ Request to schedule, for the October agenda, a Q&A session with the DMH staff who oversees grievances and appeals. (Eva)
- ☐